

## Mathematics Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. What is the VPDN? What does the VPDN do?

The Vermont Professional Development Network (VPDN) consists of the mathematics, science and literacy network leaders, and content specialists from the Vermont Department of Education (DOE). The goal of the VPDN is to promote high quality collaborative professional development for teachers and teacher leaders. The VPDN sponsors network meetings in literacy, science and mathematics in the fall and spring of each year.

### 2. What is the general focus for the mathematics network meetings?

The mathematics network meetings focus on supporting teachers in gaining a fuller understanding of the mathematics grade expectations and instructional strategies which address the specific grade expectations earmarked for the meeting. Emphasis is placed on unpacking the grade expectations while engaging in activities designed to support a deeper understanding of the 'big ideas' embedded in the GE's. The meetings also include scoring of problem solving tasks related to the content of the grade expectations. An overview of current Department of Education initiatives and resources, as well as information related to NECAP, is included in each meeting. The mathematics network meetings are led by teachers who are currently working in Vermont classrooms.

### 3. How often will mathematics network meetings be held? Where will meetings be held?

The Vermont Professional Development Network (VPDN) will offer 2 mathematics network meetings during the 2006-07 school year. The first meeting will be held in November and December, and the second meeting in April and May. The six network locations are Colchester, Montpelier, St. Johnsbury, Rutland, Manchester and Dummerston.

### 4. What NECAP resources are available to teachers?

There are several resources available electronically to support teachers in gaining a broader understanding of the grade expectations as they relate to the NECAP assessment. Following is a list of the resources and links to their locations:

- ***Released Tasks (Grades 3-8):*** Each year approximately 25% of the actual tasks which appeared on the previous year's NECAP assessment are released to teachers. They can be found at:  
<http://reporting.measuredprogress.org/NECAPpublicNH/relitem.aspx>
- ***Teacher Support Materials (High school):*** This link provides examples of tasks for the high school grade expectations: [http://www.ed.state.nh.us/Education/doe/organization/curriculum/NECAP/HS\\_NECAP.htm](http://www.ed.state.nh.us/Education/doe/organization/curriculum/NECAP/HS_NECAP.htm)

- **Resource Guides (Grades K-8):** The link below provides resource materials to facilitate understanding of the mathematics content in the GEs. There are guides for each content area: Number and Operations, Geometry and Measurement, Algebra and Functions, and Data, Statistics and Probability. View resource materials at: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_curriculum/mathematics/ge.html#ge\\_math\\_resources](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_curriculum/mathematics/ge.html#ge_math_resources)
- **Item Analysis Report:** This report is one of several which schools receive with their NECAP reports. The item analysis report gives student specific information for each released task, and is an invaluable resource for examining learning and teaching. The report provides the following information for each released item: each student's response to the item, the content strand and GE to which the item is mapped, the depth of knowledge level for the item, the item type, the correct answer, and the total possible points for the item. The report provides a vehicle for teachers and grade level teams to engage in discussion about several questions:
  - With which questions did my students have the most difficulty?
  - Is there a pattern to the incorrect student answers on specific items? If so, is there something in my teaching which might lend itself to students' misconceptions?
  - How well did my students perform on the higher depth of knowledge questions?
  - How well did my students perform on the constructed response items compared to the multiple choice or short answer questions?

*Please Note: The Item Analysis Report can only be accessed using your school's pass code. Please contact your principal for his/her pass code.*

**5. What is the status of NECAP alternate assessments for students in grades 3-8, and 11?**

Federal regulations require all students to be assessed on the NECAP state assessment as of fall '06. Students with life skills portfolios are the only exception to this regulation.

**6. What guidance can the department provide with respect to local assessment and the School Quality mandate?**

Information regarding guidance on the local assessment mandate can be found at the following link: [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_curriculum/local\\_assessment\\_resources.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_curriculum/local_assessment_resources.html)